

A CLOSE friend of Dr. William Godfrey, the newly appointed Archbishop of Westminster, tells me that it has been his shyness and skill at affecting himself which has prevented him from being more widely known.

From the days when he was studying in Rome—he is one of the few living Englishmen with the honour of having defended his doctorate thesis in public—his considerable abilities marked him out for high office. During a spell as rector of the English College in Rome, he became a personal friend of the late Pope Pius XI.

His tact and simple piety impressed all who met him when he became the first Apostolic Delegate to Great Britain, and



The New Archbishop

during the war his work as chargé d'affaires for the Holy See to the exiled Polish Government must have taught him much of the ways of diplomacy.

He has been described as a man who "has never been known to make a rash statement."

Lowering the Flag

IT is extraordinary that, of all Consulates, the Foreign Office should have decided to

close down the Consulate-General at Nice and transfer its functions to Marseilles.

There are some five thousand British residents in this corner of France, and its harbours are frequently visited by Her Majesty's ships. Nice is the fifth city in France and twenty-two foreign countries maintain Consular services in the town.

The train journey from Nice to Marseilles takes five hours and the second-class return fare costs 3,000 francs. During such emergencies as the 1953 railway strike, several hundred tourists were rescued by the Nice Consulate and countless individual British motorists and others are assisted every year.

It is small comfort for the British colony and tourists to know that Rouen, Pittsburg, Graz and Sarajevo are also to lose their Consulates as part of the Chancellor's Foreign Office economies, and I hope the decision will be urgently reconsidered.

Occupe-toi de Madeleine

IT was, I believe, at Her Majesty's express wish that the play in which the Queen saw the Renaud-Barrault company was "Occupe-toi d'Amélie" and not the grave classic of the schoolroom which had tentatively been put up to the Palace.

So immense has been the success of the Feydeau farce that I was not surprised to hear from Mr. Daubeny that he would like nothing better than to bring it, and the company, back to London for a run in the New Year.

Madame Madeleine Renaud, meanwhile, is looking for an English comedy, old or new, in

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which to deploy her quicksilver art: suggestions (but not manuscripts, please!) sent to me will be forwarded.

Opus Maximus

ERNEST HEMINGWAY arrived last week in Paris from Spain, where he has been

for the past two months. The tropical heat of Cuba was affecting Mrs. Hemingway's health and, in any case, Hemingway wanted to be back in Europe again.

He will be spending Christmas in Venice and will then move to Africa to work on a

particular section of the giant novel he has been writing for six years. It takes in, I believe, the Spanish Civil War, Hitler's war, and the Mau Mau campaign.

The manuscript is already 800,000 words long and the end is not yet in sight. The pros-

pect of this gigantic tome is horrific. We must all be very, very brave about it.

Slough of No Despond

SLOUGH is taking its road accident figures by the throat. The town has just installed a further six sets of traffic lights, making a total of twenty-one lights in two-and-a-half miles.

Last week two large notices, mysteriously shrouded in sackings, were unveiled to reveal "Signals" set at 25 to 30 m.p.h.—the speed motorists should maintain to catch all the lights at green.

Other safety inventions have included broad yellow kerb stripes for "No Waiting," and the new "Yield" sign at junctions. A ban on unleashed dogs is being considered.

The Slough safety experiments have cost £150,000 in eighteen months, but fatal and serious accidents have dropped by 6 per cent., against a 13 per cent. increase in the rest of the country.

Any Takers?

SALVADOR DALI, who likes to keep in the news, has invented a new art-form—"Bulletism."

Dall-fires lead pellets at a litographic plate to produce lines and squiggles—though how they differ from other lines and squiggles is not revealed.

The first of Dali's bulletist pictures is entitled "Don Quixote." Meanwhile Fasquelle, the French publishers, are at work on a limited edition of the book "Don Quixote" with illustrations by Dali.

The edition consists of 190 numbered copies. Copy No. 1 will contain eight original water colours by Dali. It will cost £10,000. The next three copies, each containing one water colour, will cost £1,000. The remainder of the edition, Dali's reproductions, is priced from £95 to £300.

Strategic Appointment

THE novelist who wins the Prix Goncourt is, in general, a "man killed with kindness": for his immediate success (rarely fewer than 100,000 copies sold in the next six months) is often followed by a lifetime of obscurity.

In England, the award causes little or no stir; but this year's winner, M. Romain Gary, is known to many people here both for his own work and for his marriage to Miss Lesley Blanch, whose "Wilder Shores of Love" set off many a

daydream in kitchen and laundrette.

M. Gary's prize-winning "Les Racines du Ciel" has everything to commend it to current taste—adventure, allegory, an African setting and an engaging and not-quite-lethal desperation. Whether the film rights are already sold I cannot say, but M. Gary in any case, well placed to negotiate them: he is France's Consul-General in Los Angeles.

Plaque Trouble

IT was in 1875 that the Royal Society of Arts began telling London about itself, by fixing a plaque to a house in Gerrard Street where John Dryden had once lived.

Burke, Nelson, Johnson and Napoleon III soon shared the same honour, and since the L.C.C. took over the good work in 1901 the genial blue rash has spread until this week the number of plaques stood at 204.

The rule that the famous should have been dead twenty years kept the selection uncontroversial until last week, when a considerable rumpus greeted the L.C.C.'s proposal to fix the 205th plaque to a house in Paddington.

Stalemate

The plaque was to mark the visit of an Indian politician, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who came in 1919 to take part in a lawsuit and give evidence before a parliamentary committee.

The Town Planning Committee describe Tilak as a prominent Indian home-ruler and educationist, known as "Lokamanya"—beloved leader of the people.

The objectors point to the brevity of the visit and to the fact that few members even of the Council can have heard of the man before the plaque was proposed.

For the time being there is stalemate. The owners of the Paddington house refuse to accept the plaque, and the L.C.C. has no power to insist.

An English Buddhist

MR. CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS is a most unusual man. At the time of his appointment as Recorder of Guildford, he was leading the Western delegation to last month's celebrations in Katmandu and New Delhi to mark the 2,500th anniversary of the final passing of the Buddha.

When he returned at the beginning of last week, he at once plunged into the two murder trials in which he was

leading for the Crown at the Old Bailey on Thursday.

The son of Sir Travers Humphreys, he became interested in Buddhism whilst an undergraduate at Trinity Hall, and has been Founder President of the English Buddhist Society since 1924.

Uncounted Flock

Britain's premier Buddhist tells me that the conference at Katmandu was by far the biggest ever held. There were no religious services. Instead, after interminable speeches, working parties sat down to discuss practical aspects of Buddhist education, thought and propaganda.

Buddhists have no regular organisation, so Mr. Humphreys



Humphreys (right) and Friend

can give me no idea of the size of his flock here, beyond estimating it at "many thousands." But the appearance of the modest delegation seems to have caused as big a stir in India as the arrival of the Dalai Lama.

Black Gold

THE world's most important oil lobby is the bar in the delegates' lounge at the U.N. There the "laison officers" of the great Middle Eastern oil companies lean on their elbows, buy drinks for Arab delegates and the Press, dispense "ideas" and sniff the wind.

The majority are former State Department officials or ex-members of the Press corps. Their job is to hang around the U.N. at very high salaries and expense accounts and hope to be mistaken for delegates.

When this occasionally happens, they earn their pay a thousandfold.

People and Words

"Are two opinions ever allowed in the Trade Union world? Because man takes a wrong view about his livelihood he taken from him?"

—Mr. Justice HANCOCK.

"If you kidnap a girl, the maximum penalty is two years, and if you kidnap a dog it is five years." —Mr. GEORGE BENSON, M.P.

"The Commonwealth system will wither and decay if, back to back in the name of piety, Christian morality by a combination of the two greatest materialistic civilisations known to mankind."

—MR. PATRICK MATTAR, M.P.